

THE HAUNTED EXCURSION

by Susan McCulloch

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As an *OUTREACH* Trainer, I always look forward to the adventure of doing a workshop on the road. The many unknowns and the unique settings lend a distinct flavor to each gathering. However, nothing could have prepared me for one workshop in Idlewild, California. All of the *GATEWAY OUTREACH*® trainers who had attended *OUTREACH* Continuing Accreditation (*ORCA*) had taken the *ADVANCED EXCURSION*, but this was the first run with regular folks, so there would be even more unknowns.

I flew out a day early to look for any kinks in the physical setup and to recover from crossing time zones. My sponsor, Kathleen Woeber, had scoped out a beautiful house up in the mountains for the workshop. The participants would sleep over at a nearby bed and breakfast. If I had known then what I later found out, I would have slept there too! After some shopping and dinner in Idlewild, it was time to decide who would sleep where. The house had two master bedrooms with separate baths on one side, a huge living room—complete with a baby grand piano—and another bedroom on the far side of the living room. After a round robin with Kathleen (“Oh, no. I insist. YOU pick first”), I began to prepare for bed.

It started in the bathroom—an eerie sensation of being watched. Even after drawing all the window shades, the hair on the back of my neck was still standing up and I had goosebumps all over. Okay, time for some self-talk: “Susan, this is settling-in nonsense. You need a good night’s sleep, so cut it out!” MUCH quicker than usual, I was into my jammies and under the covers. I left the light on. But every time my eyes closed there was the strongest sensation of someone standing directly over me, wanting something. “Look,” I said forcefully, “I’m doing a workshop tomorrow and I need my sleep. Clear out!” No change. Finally, I read until I was nodding, turned off the light, and fell asleep.

I awoke abruptly in the middle of the night, groggy and disoriented. Laying in the semidarkness gathering my wits, I realized someone was in bed with me. My brain said, “Oh, yeah, you’re doing a workshop with Kathleen in California.” Then I remembered—Kathleen had her own room. I stared, frozen with fear, at the other form beneath the covers: at the back of someone’s head, to be precise. When the head started to turn toward me, my paralysis broke. I jumped out of bed and hit the lights. Covered in sweat, my heart pounding, I looked at the indentation

the body had made. Creeping into bed with Kathleen felt silly. After deep breathing and stretching, I got back into bed with the light on and read myself to sleep. Once again, I awoke with a start. I had fallen asleep and pulled all the covers up to my neck. My feet were hanging out. Actually, three feet peeked out at me. Leaping out of bed in a cold sweat, my heart racing, I realized that my response was quite unlike Bob Monroe's. No observing, asking questions, or getting names and dates for me, I was just scared out of my wits!

Kathleen found me sitting on the bed and praying for sunrise in the morning. Now it was time to lead an *ADVANCED EXCURSION* with no sleep. When Kathleen heard about my eventful night, she laughed and asked, "Do you want to know the story behind your room?" "My room has a story? Are you kidding me?" Kathleen said that the house's owner had sponsored many concerts there and had grown quite close to some of the musicians. In fact, two of them had become her dear friends. When they died of AIDS, that room had held all their memorabilia and now their ashes were buried under the bush outside my window.

After initial relief at knowing who my "ghosts" were, I decided to change rooms. Surely, there was no reason to alarm the participants. However, the "ghosts" had other plans. Whenever we were on tape, the house popped, creaked, and groaned and a feeling of great pressure filled the room. Off tape, nothing. On tape, snap, crackle, pop. Then participants began to report. They heard other voices resonant tuning throughout the tape. They felt someone holding their hands or sitting next to them, trying to figure out what they were doing. People began seeing a presence at the piano. They heard piano music accompanying resonant tuning. The *piece de resistance* was when the paneled window treatment started to swing back and forth, higher and higher. The air conditioning wasn't on. So much for not telling the participants!

Later that night, as Kathleen and I climbed into bed in her room, she assured me that there was nothing to fear. She had done a lot of work with clearing entities from houses. I thought to myself, "Yeah, just wait," and rolled over. As soon as we turned out the light, pressure seemed to build up in the doorway. It felt like the house was breathing; it felt like they wanted us in the other room; it felt like they had something to say. Kathleen remarked, "Goodness, this is very intense, I'm almost going into a fear response myself." We sent love and invited them to settle down. My last thought before oblivion was, "Kathleen can handle this. I'm too tired."

Shortly thereafter, I sat bolt upright to find the chandelier swinging wildly, the windows bending in and out of their frames, and the bed rolling around on the floor. If this was a remake of the *Exorcist*, I wasn't interested in auditioning for Linda Blair's part! I turned terror-filled eyes to Kathleen, and she burst out laughing. "No, no, Susan, this is an earthquake!" I said, "Aren't we supposed to get under a doorway or something?" We kept laughing while stumbling across the heaving floor to stand beneath the doorway. The house was quiet and still afterward: no "ghosts," no pressure, no pops, and no cracks. Resonant tuning "backup" on the second day was minimal. All was well.

Bob and I will be heading to California on October 6 for an *EXCURSION/HUMAN PLUS* weekend at the Glen Ivy community. The community's spa and red clay mud baths are an added attraction. I hope any resident ghosts are ready for some pampering.

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